

## **Proposed Recreation Management**

### **Preferred Alternative**

Recreation on the Peshtigo River State Forest is important to many people and plays an important role in the regional tourism economy. Visitors have been coming to the river and its adjacent lands for generations, and those who vacation or live near the forest know the beauty of its flowages, the diversity of its trails, and the extent of its forests. Fortunately, opportunities abound for recreational activities on the water and throughout the forest.

Since the forest was established, annual visitation to the Peshtigo River State Forest has increased steadily. The most popular recreational activities include fishing, boating, snowmobiling and hunting. There is also demand for new and improved recreational trails like hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding trails. While the Peshtigo River State Forest does not currently have any designated mountain biking or horseback riding opportunities, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for such opportunities statewide as well as the Peshtigo River State Forest area. There has also been increased pressure for additional water camping opportunities. Further, there is a shortage of designated beaches in the area; most people currently swim at a number of boat launches on the flowages.

The Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan will maintain nearly all of the existing recreational amenities and opportunities that were available under Wisconsin Public Service Corporation management. It also provides for a number of amenity expansions or additions to help meet growing demand. The primary additions include an equestrian campground, more canoe and water-based campsites, the creation of designated day-use areas, several expanded boat landings, and more hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking trails. In addition, an increased emphasis would be put on self-guided interpretive trails to promote forestry awareness and natural history. Most of the recreational facilities and amenities are shown on the Current and Proposed Recreation map.

### **Recreation Management Objectives**

- Provide a range of camping opportunities by maintaining and upgrading existing camping facilities and by establishing new or enhanced facilities including primitive canoe camping, primitive water camping, rustic family camping, indoor group camping, and equestrian camping.
- Provide areas for day uses such as picnicking, boating, swimming as well as passive recreational activities by maintaining and upgrading existing facilities and by establishing two new day use areas – one on High Falls Reservoir and one on Caldron Falls Reservoir.
- Provide access to the waters of the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs by maintaining and upgrading the existing boat landings and canoe access points.
- Provide a system of designated and non-designated non-motorized recreational trails by maintaining, and in some cases enhancing, existing trails and by the establishment of new trails and trail segments.
- Provide designated snowmobile trails at existing levels.
- Support traditional outdoor sporting activities such as hunting, trapping, fishing, archery, etc, by maintaining and enhancing existing boat landings, access points, and other facilities.

## Summary of Recreation Management Preferred Alternative

### Camping

- Addition of 15 rustic campsites to the recently acquired Old Veterans Lake Campground. Amenities would include vault toilets, hand pumped water, and gravel roads.
- Indoor group camp facility for 16 people. This facility would have electricity, indoor plumbing, and sleeping accommodations. Proposed siting in the Seymour Rapids area.
- Addition of nine primitive campsites along the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine and a picnic table. These sites are accessible by watercraft or by foot.
- Equestrian campground with 20 rustic sites including vault toilets, potable water, manure bins, a corral area, and a group gathering area. Individual campsites would have fire rings, picnic tables, hitching posts, tent pads and a parking area. This would be sited near High Falls Reservoir.

### Day-Use Areas

- Creation of two new fee required day-use areas. These areas would include: water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, grills, fire rings, fishing pier and a 100 car parking lot. There would also be an expansion and renovation of the adjoining boat landings.

### Boat Landings

Boat landing types include canoe slides, carry-in, cement plank, and gravel. Not all boat landings would have the same amenities, but most would see some improvements including:

- Additional parking.
- Addition of facilities such as bathrooms, changing rooms, and water.
- Fishing pier, launch approach, and boat boarding dock.
- Erosion control and repair for the parking lots and approaches.

### Non-Motorized Recreation

#### *Hiking and Mountain Biking*

- 28 miles of new hiking trails on primitive, low maintenance trails.
- Day-hiking opportunities would continue to be offered on the woods road network and on various volunteer trails.
- Propose a 15-20 mile-long mountain bike loop. This new trail system would be located within the Spring Rapids Trail System with future expansion into the Seymour Rapids section.

### *Cross-country Ski Trails*

- Moderate adjustments would be made to the Spring Rapids Trail System to avoid conflicts with creek crossing and user conflicts.
- An upgrade to the Spring Rapids trailhead would be made, with amenities to include a vault toilet, water, and a shelter.
- A new trailhead would be built at the entrance of the Seymour Rapids Trail. Amenities would include a vault toilet and water.

### *Horseback Trails*

- The state forest would provide designated equestrian trails on the west side of High Falls (south of Highway X) and the south side of Johnson Falls.
- A new trailhead would be built south of Highway X, on the west side of High Falls, and near the proposed horse campground. This would accommodate 20 trailers and would also have a vault toilet.

### **Motorized Recreation**

There would be no significant changes to the snowmobile trails located on the Peshtigo River State Forest. Currently the Peshtigo River State Forest has a network of over 20 miles of snowmobile trails that link state land with private and county snowmobile trails.

Licensed cycles, 4x4s, and other street-legal vehicles may operate on open Peshtigo River State Forest roads (including logging roads) that are not bermed, gated or signed as closed. The Peshtigo River State Forest policy regarding the use of street licensed motor vehicles would remain unchanged.

The proposed plan does not designate any future ATV trail expansion. The state forest would continue to cooperate with regional partners and maintain the existing ATV trail network while maintaining environmental quality and harmony with other forest users.

## **Preferred Alternative**

### **Camping**

The Peshtigo River State Forest provides a limited number of primitive canoe camping opportunities. Currently there are 10 canoe sites at 3 different locations along the Peshtigo River. One area of potential campground expansion is the newly acquired Old Veterans Lake Campground. A new camping opportunity would be available in the form of a horse campground west of High Falls Reservoir and east of Parkway Road. In addition, four island campsites would be available on High Falls Reservoir, and one remote access site would be available on each of Caldron Falls, High Falls, and Johnson Falls reservoirs. The future camping expansions are based on camping demand projections and available funding. Other considerations for where to site new camping opportunities include their proximity to water and the availability of suitable land for expansion.

In addition to adding new campsites, all or portions of campsites may be renovated. The density of campsites (i.e. separation distance between sites) in the campground may be substantially out of compliance with newer requirements of NR 44.07(7) (e). If so, it requires that there be 100 to 200 feet of space between sites for rustic campgrounds, and approximately 100 feet for modern campgrounds. The purpose of this wider campsite spacing is to enhance privacy, increase the sense of solitude, and minimize conflicts between camping groups. To come into compliance with the new requirements, and address safety and site suitability concerns, campsites may be closed and relocated to another part of the campground at the discretion of the Forest Superintendent.

### *Rustic Family Campgrounds*

Many people have come to associate traditional rustic style campgrounds with state forests. Campers are attracted to the small, quiet character of state forest campgrounds in contrast to more modern or developed campgrounds. Typically, these campgrounds range from about 20 to 70 campsites, and often have wider spacing than modern campgrounds. Furthermore, they have only minimal facilities including hand-pumped water and pit toilets. Generally, electric campsites are not provided in this type of campground.

One opportunity for providing this type of camping experience is the former Marinette County Old Veterans Lake Campground. Old Veterans Lake has been acquired by the state as part of a land transaction with Marinette County. This facility currently features 16 rustic spur-type campsites adjacent to a small lake, vault toilets, hand pumped water, and gravel roads. This style of campground fits well with the rustic recreational theme of state forests. An additional 15 campsites would be constructed at this facility, bringing the total number of campsites at Old Veterans Lake up to 31.

In addition to constructing new rustic campsites, all or portions of the existing campsites at Old Veterans Lake may be renovated. To address safety or site suitability concerns, some campsites may be closed and relocated to another part of the campground. Also, the density of campsites (i.e. separation distance between sites) would be brought up to a standard of 100 to 200 feet between sites wherever possible. The purpose of this wider campsite spacing is to enhance privacy, increase the sense of solitude, and minimize conflicts between camping groups.

### *Indoor Group Camp*

Indoor group campgrounds provide an excellent opportunity for large groups of people to gather without affecting the experiences of other campers. Such a facility could be used by Boy and Girl Scout troops, church groups, extended family reunions, and other large group gatherings. One indoor group cabin, with electricity, water, and sleeping accommodations for up to 16 people, is proposed for the Seymour Rapids area. This site was selected because of its scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, easy access to and from the road network, and close proximity to the Peshtigo River.

#### Alternatives Considered

##### *Indoor Group Camp*

One alternative site discussed was near the rustic family campground and High Falls Reservoir. This site was not selected because of its poor soil type, concerns over additional development near the High Falls Reservoir, poor road and utility access, and the close proximity to the family campground.

### *Primitive Camping*

The Peshtigo River State Forest currently offers one type of primitive camping experience: canoe camping. The current locations of existing designated primitive campsites are shown on the Current and Proposed Recreation map. Primitive campsites generally are widely dispersed, have minimal clearing, and have a native soil surface. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine, and a picnic table (except in a Type 1 recreational use setting where tables are prohibited). Each type of primitive camping is discussed below.

### *Canoe Camping*

There are currently 10 primitive remote canoe campsites located on 3 different areas of Johnson Falls Reservoir and the Peshtigo River. These sites are accessible only by water, stays are limited to one night, and they cannot be reserved. The State Forest Superintendent will renovate the sites as needed.

#### Alternatives Considered

##### *Canoe Camping*

The primitive water access campsites on the two islands in High Falls will stay in the plan. At the time of implementation a multi-discipline group will examine the islands for the best sites to minimize human impacts. Possibly four sites on one island will be selected to keep one island free of camping impacts. Firewood can be delivered to the island sites periodically to minimize depletion of dead and downed wood.

### *Primitive Water Camping*

Primitive water campsites, new to the Peshtigo River State Forest, are being introduced on the forest. Up to nine primitive campsites would be built along the Peshtigo River and its reservoirs. Three sites would be located on Caldron Falls Reservoir- one near Crane Bay, one between Boat Landings 9 and 10, and one near Boat Landing 9 and the Caldron Falls dam. On High Falls Reservoir, there would be one site north of Old Veterans Lake campground. Four sites would be located on two islands on High Fall Reservoir, north of Bass Bay. On Johnson Falls Reservoir, one site would be located on the north side of the reservoir. Primitive campsites generally are widely dispersed, and have a minimal clearing and a primitive soil surface. Primitive campsites are limited to a tent clearing, fire ring, box latrine and a picnic table. These sites are accessible by watercraft or by foot.

### *Equestrian Campground*

An equestrian campground would be established on the forest, west of High Falls Reservoir and east of Parkway Road. The proposed campground would include 20 rustic sites and would feature such amenities as vault toilets, potable water, manure bins, a corral area, and a group gathering area with an open-sided shelter, access to horse trails, and a firewood bin. Individual campsites would have fire rings, picnic tables, hitching posts, tent pads and a parking area. Some of the campsites would be drive-through and some would be back-in sites. Campsites would be large enough to accommodate large-wheeled units. Adjacent to this campground would be a group horse campground. This would include two large sites that can accommodate up to 60 people. Day-use trail parking would be available near the equestrian campground.

This site was selected for an equestrian campground because of its accommodating size and easy access from a county highway. The site is also situated near other recreational facilities and trails, and does would not conflict with proposed Native Community Management Areas. The site is relatively flat, and has both forested and opens areas.

### **Alternatives Considered**

#### *Equestrian Campground*

Three alternative sites were discussed for possible location of the equestrian campground. The first location was near Caldron Falls off of Landing 12 Lane. This site was not selected because of its proximity to a proposed Native Community Management Area and the potential for invasive species spread. The second location was north of Bass Bay off of Parkway Road. This site was not selected because of poor topography (e.g. rolling hills, exposed bedrock), possible user conflicts, an inability to connect to a trail system, and the proximity to private homes. The third site is located near county forest land and Bushman Road. This site was not selected because of possible user conflicts and the poor road network. In addition, the site is not large enough to accommodate this type of campground, and it has soils that are unsuitable for equestrian trails.

## Day-Use Areas

As of 2006, there are two designated day-use areas on the Peshtigo River State Forest. One, Stephenson Town Park, is operated in conjunction with the Town of Stephenson. The other, Wayside Park, is located just off of Highway 64 and is operated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Day-use areas typically provide activities like picnicking, sunbathing, and swimming. Some sites may also feature scenic vistas, hiking and nature trails, and boat landings, occasionally with fishing piers. Currently, many of the 15 boat landings within the Peshtigo River State Forest are also intensively used for these activities.

In addition to the existing day-use areas at Stephenson Town Park and Wayside Park, two new day-use areas would be developed. The new East Bay day-use location would be a fee-required area and would include drinking water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, grills, fire rings, fishing pier and a 100-car parking lot. In addition to the day-use area, the existing boat landing would be renovated to meet accessibility standards. A boarding dock and a paved parking lot with space for 75 cars and trailers would be provided. This site was selected because of good southern and western exposure, a natural sandy river bottom, easy access from current road network, and established history of this type of use on site.

A second day-use area would be adjacent to Boat Landing 9 on Caldron Falls Reservoir. Like the East Bay day-use area, the new Musky Point Beach would be a fee-required area. This day-use area would include drinking water, vault toilets with a changing area, a designated beach with a marked swimming area, picnic tables, fishing pier, grills, fire rings, and a 100-car parking lot. The boat landing and trailer parking would be repositioned from its current location to a spot farther to the west. A mobility-impaired accessible boat landing and boarding dock, and a paved parking lot with a space for up to 30 cars and trailers would be included. This site was selected because it already has this established use; it has good southern exposure, and a sandy river bottom. It is also of sufficient size to accommodate users and the development would be at the end of a town road that would not create conflict with private landowners.

## Alternatives Considered

### *Day-use Areas*

One alternative site that was discussed for development as a day use area was Boat Landing 8. This site was not selected because it is too small, and is already experiencing high levels of use. As a result, environmental damage is occurring including soil compaction, erosion of the shoreline, and tree injury. Spatially, there is no room to expand this area due to the nearby wetlands and adjacent residential properties. These properties, along with the associated vehicle traffic, have the potential to create user conflicts. Finally, with little or no room to change the design of the site, the boat launch would be too close to the potential swimming area, creating an obvious safety concern.

Others sites on Caldron Falls and on High Falls were considered but were not selected for similar reasons.

## Boat Landings

With more than 3,000 acres of reservoir surface area, water-based recreation is one of the primary attractions for Peshtigo River State Forest visitors. Existing boat landings have different characteristics regarding their degree of development and type of access to the water. These boat landing types include canoe slides, carry-in, cement plank, and gravel. The State Forest Superintendent has the authority to close and relocate boat landings as needed.

### *Existing Boat Landings*

Boat Landing	Cement Plank	Car / Trailer Capacity	Picnic Table	Fishing Piers
West Bay / #1	X	15		X
Bass Bay /#2	X	10		
East Bay /#3	X	20		
Twin /#4	X	20		
Channel /#5	X	20		X
Woods Creek /#6	X	30		X
Rock Cove /#7	X	40	X	X
Caldron Bay /#8	X	25	X	X
Musky Point /#9	X	30	X	
North Bay /#10	X	15		
Crandall Creek / #11	X	15		
Roaring Rapids / #12	X	20		
Thunder /#14	X	15		
Peshtigo / #1	X	7		
Potato Rapids / #1	X	15	X	X

Proposed Boat Landing Improvements would include: parking lot changes / additional parking, facilities (bathroom, changing rooms, water, and fishing pier), launch approach, and boat boarding dock.

*Proposed Boat Landing Developments*

<b>Boat Landing</b>	<b>Parking Changes</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Launch Approach</b>	<b>Dock</b>
<b>West Bay / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Bass Bay / #2</b>	Reconfigure existing 10 space lot	NA	No change	No
<b>East Bay / #3</b>	Provide 75 car lot	Water, vault toilets	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Twin / #4</b>	Reconfigure existing 20 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Channel / #5</b>	Reconfigure existing 20 space lot; add 20 space lot to the south of existing lot	Vault toilet, water	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Woods Creek / #6</b>	No change to existing 30 space lot	NA	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Rock Cove / #7</b>	Reconfigure existing 40 space lot and add new 40 space lot	Vault toilet, water, fishing pier	Paved Approach	Yes
<b>Caldron Bay / #8</b>	Reconfigure existing 25 space lot and add new 15 space lot	Vault toilet, water	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Musky Point / #9</b>	Reposition current parking to the west, add 30 space lot	Vault toilet, water	Reposition to the west and pave	Yes
<b>North Bay / #10</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add new 15 spaces	NA	Paved approach	Yes
<b>Crandall Creek / #11</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add new 30 spaces	Vault toilet, water	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Roaring Rapids / #12</b>	No changes to existing 20 space lot	Vault toilet, changing rooms, water	Renovate and pave launch ramp	No
<b>Thunder / #14</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot	Fishing pier	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Peshtigo / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 7 space lot	NA	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Potato Rapids / #1</b>	Reconfigure existing 15 space lot and add 10 new spaces	Fishing pier	Renovate and pave approach and launch ramp	Yes
<b>Medicine Brook</b>	Reconfigure existing 5 space lot	NA	Add canoe slide	No
<b>Seymour Rapids</b>	Reconfigure existing 10 space lot	NA	Renovate existing canoe take out and put in	No
<b>Spring Rapids</b>	Reconfigure existing 5 space lot and add 5 new spaces	NA	Renovate existing canoe take out	No

## Non-Motorized Trails

The Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to offer a variety of designated trails under the proposed Master Plan. The phrase “designated trails” refers to trails that are designed, maintained, and limited to specific uses, such as hiking or interpretive nature trails. Currently, there is a designated moderate non-motorized trail system located within the Peshtigo River State Forest. These trails are available for recreational activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. In addition to designated trails, the Peshtigo River State Forest offers numerous miles of non-designated “woods roads”, which are open to hiking, biking, horseback riding, and snowshoeing (unless closed for a specific activity). A “woods road” is generally a primitive single-lane road with two vegetation-free wheel tracks. The tread is usually compacted native soil, often sand or gravel, but sometimes less stable material such as clay or a mixture of sand and muck. The woods road is typically not maintained, therefore washouts and ruts are sometimes encountered.

### *Hiking*

The existing eight miles of designated hiking trails and canoe portage trails would be maintained under the Plan. Day-hiking opportunities would continue to be offered on the woods road network and various other trails. Two new primitive trails - one around Caldron Falls and one around High Falls - would be developed. The Caldron Falls trail would be approximately 12 miles in length and the High Falls trail would be about 16 miles in length. The exact lengths of these trails would be determined in the field. A primitive trail is a single-file walking path usually established with the native soil as a tread surface. The path is narrow, with little or no clearing done and little or no annual maintenance. It most closely resembles game trails that are kept open due to regular use by deer and other animals.

In order to promote the sustainability of primitive trails, occasional management would be necessary. Such management would include the placement of culverts or stepping stones at stream crossings, constructing sections of flow-through boardwalk across wetland or seep areas, and other measures to prevent soil erosion and environmental damage.

These trails would be open to hiking, snowshoeing, and horseback riding, and would generally follow the shoreline of the Peshtigo River, Caldron Falls Flowage and High Falls Flowage. A similar trail, about five miles in length, would be established at Potato Rapids Flowage. In addition to using existing trail segments, new sections of trail will be developed. Additional trails would be available for hikers to visit designated scenic vistas. These vistas would be located at The Narrows, High Banks, and Seymour Rock. Finally, a new one mile self-guided, accessible interpretive trail would be developed at Old Veterans Lake Campground. This trail would also serve as a snowshoe trail in the winter season.

### *Mountain Biking*

A new 15 to 20 mile-long mountain bike loop would be developed. This new trail system would be located within the Spring Rapids Trail System with future expansion into the Seymour Rapids section. This trail system would be designed to challenge a variety of different skill levels. A portion of the trail would be routed on closed forest roads, which would provide a wide tread surface suitable for casual or family biking. A “challenge” segment of the trail would be developed with a narrow course in a hilly area. Under the new trail designation, the best available design standards would be employed to ensure minimal erosion from mountain bike use. During the redesign process, portions of the trail may be closed. The forest staff would include area mountain bike clubs in the development and implementation of a mountain bike trail management plan.

### *Horseback Riding*

Horseback riding opportunities on the Peshtigo River State Forest would increase. The state forest would provide up to 25 miles of designated equestrian trails stemming from a trailhead at the proposed Equestrian Campground. In addition, horses may be ridden on roads, snowmobile trails, and other undesignated trails that are not indicated as closed. Horseback riding is prohibited on designated nature, hiking, or mountain biking trails. These trails would have a “no horses” sign posted at the trailhead. The Peshtigo River State Forest would cooperate with local horse riding clubs to develop the trails. (Property manager could prohibit horses in other areas if needed.)

Under the new trail designations, the best available design standards would be employed to ensure minimal erosion for horse-riding use. A new trailhead would be built near the proposed horse campground. This would accommodate 20 trailers and would also have a vault toilet.

### *Cross-Country Skiing*

At present, eight miles of designated cross-country ski trails are available on the Peshtigo River State Forest. In addition to the maintenance of the current trail system, future expansion is planned. Two trail systems are currently groomed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with a local ski club: the Seymour Rapids and Spring Rapids trail systems. Some moderate adjustments would be made to the Spring Rapids Trail System to avoid conflicts with creek crossing and user conflicts. Moreover, a trail connecting both systems would be built on state land. Cross-country skiing in ungroomed areas is also available across most of the Peshtigo River State Forest. An upgrade to the Spring Rapids trailhead would be made, with amenities to include a vault toilet, water, and a shelter. A new trailhead would be built at the entrance of the Seymour Rapids Trail. Amenities would include a vault toilet and water. As with most State trail systems, trail passes would be required.

### *Snowshoeing*

Snowshoeing is currently allowed everywhere on the forest except on groomed, designated cross-country ski trails. In addition, the Plan would designate and promote the use of the self-guided nature trail at Old Veterans Lake Park and the primitive hiking trails along the flowages.

### *Archery*

An archery trail will continue to be offered in conjunction with the Woodland Archery Club in southwest corner of the Potato Rapids property. This trail would be maintained for the practice of archery skills and holding archery competitions.

### *Motorized Trails*

#### *Snowmobile*

Currently the Peshtigo River State Forest has over 20 miles of snowmobile trails that link state land with private and county snowmobile trails. Snowmobile trails within the Peshtigo River State Forest are generally developed to NR 44's Lightly Developed trail standards, and are operated on both state and private land. Sections of the trail on private land are used through land lease agreements, often operated by snowmobile clubs. Overall, there would be no significant changes to the snowmobile trails located on the Peshtigo River State Forest. Snowmobile trail parking would be available at Boat Landings 3, 5, and 9.

At the discretion of the Forest Superintendent, changes to the Peshtigo River State Forest snowmobile trail system may be made to ensure safety; to keep snowmobiles off roads; as a response to a loss in route access across private lands; if resource degradation develops; and/or if unacceptable user conflicts occur. Any changes must be consistent with the requirements of the area's land use classification.

#### *Cycles, 4x4s, and Other Licensed Motor Vehicles (Forest Road Access)*

The policy regarding the use of street licensed motor vehicles, following state statute, would remain unchanged. Under this policy, licensed cycles, 4x4s, and other vehicles meeting street-legal requirements may operate on open Peshtigo River State Forest roads (including logging roads) that are not bermed, gated or signed as closed. Unlicensed and unregistered motor vehicles are not allowed on the state forest.

#### *All-Terrain Vehicles*

The Department supports the development and maintenance of All-Terrain Vehicle riding opportunities on appropriate trails, particularly trails that contribute to regional trail networks. To support both statewide and regional goals, the use of All-Terrain Vehicles on the Peshtigo River State Forest is authorized on trails designated for All-Terrain Vehicle use. Winter All-Terrain Vehicle riding is permitted on the existing snowmobile trails when the snowmobile trails are officially open. The state forest would continue to cooperate with regional partners and maintain the existing All-Terrain Vehicle trail network while maintaining environmental quality and harmony with other forest users. However, because a suitable route or routes for All-Terrain Vehicle trails on the Peshtigo River State Forest have not been identified, this plan does not designate any future All-Terrain Vehicle trail expansion. Attempts to identify potential trail options have been fraught with difficulty because of unsuitable soil types, potential conflicts with residents and other recreationists, and defining appropriate routes that can link to trail systems outside the Peshtigo River State Forest.

## Alternatives Considered

### *All-Terrain Vehicles*

One alternative that the state forest was asked to consider by users was an All-Terrain Vehicle play area south of Johnson Falls Road. This alternative was not selected because of environmental and safety concerns. Among other reasons, there is a known osprey nest in the vicinity, the proposed play area would have the potential to cause severe soil degradation, and there are liability issues with American Transmission Company.

## Other Activities and Amenities

### *Swimming*

Swimming occurs at both designated and non-designated swimming beach areas. A designated beach has a regulatory marker or posted notice. Most designated swimming areas have toilet facilities. Non-designated swim areas are any waters that are not signed as “closed to swimming.” State forests do not supply lifeguards at any beaches; swimming is at the user’s discretion.

Under the Plan, two new swimming beaches would be provided. Musky Point Beach would be developed at Boat Landing 9 on Caldron Falls Reservoir, and East Bay Beach would be developed at Boat Landing 3 on High Falls Reservoir. Swimming beaches are being proposed as integral parts of the two proposed new Day Use Areas described earlier in this document.

### *Boating, Canoe Access, and Canoe Trail*

With 3,000 acres of water and a number of streams, water-based recreation is a primary attraction for Peshtigo River State Forest visitors. Under the revised Plan, boating and canoe access sites (i.e. boat landings) would be maintained. In addition, several upgrades are planned at the boat landings as shown in the previous table.

A network of canoe trails and portages can be found within the forest boundary. Canoe campsites are found along these routes. Portages are, and would continue to be, maintained. Current trail location information may be found by contacting the forest office.

### *Fishing*

Fishing regulations are outside the scope of the proposed Master Plan. The Plan supports fishing primarily by providing water access to anglers, which includes angler access trails, boat landings and fishing piers. Fishing piers are usually located in association with campgrounds and picnic areas. A number of the piers are accessible to the disabled. The Forest Superintendent may construct or relocate fishing piers as deemed necessary, consistent with the land use classification standards for the site.

Some access sites are open in the winter for ice fishing. The Towns determine the plowing of town roads for ice fishing access.

### *Hunting and Trapping*

Hunting and trapping regulations are outside the scope of the Peshtigo River State Forest Master Plan. The Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to offer opportunities for small and big game hunting and trapping. The diversity of forest types, lakes and wetlands found on the property would continue to provide high quality habitat for many game species. Miles of logging roads and non-designated trails would continue to be open for hunting access by foot and/or motor vehicle.

### *Education and Interpretation*

The Peshtigo River State Forest encourages visitors to take the opportunity to learn about forestry, natural history, wildlife management, and other natural resources topics. Staff has taken part in school programs and camps, and given talks and tours to area clubs on these issues. In the proposed shared facility with Governor Thompson State Park, the forest and park headquarters would have space for regularly scheduled interpretive programs. As mentioned, a proposed self-guided accessible nature trail would be created at Old Veterans Lake Campground.

### **Recreation Land Use Agreements**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has a long history of cooperation in managing and maintaining public recreational and community facilities. Examples of our partners who have land use agreements include Marinette County, the Town of Stephenson, and the Woodland Archery Club. Land use agreements on the Peshtigo River State Forest would continue to be evaluated periodically.